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Magic Touch

Otherworldly Romance

PART 11

A MYSTERIOUS LETTER ARRIVED FROM NOWHERE...
WHAT COULD IT BE?
MESSAGE KING
YOU ASKED US TO MEET YOU RIGHT AWAY.
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
MORE TO THE POINT...
WHAT IS THIS LETTER?
HOLD ON. LET ME EXPLAIN...
Urgh... Where should I start...?
...
MANAGER!!
SLAM
YOU SAID IT WASN'T HAPPENING THIS YEAR!!
WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
CROWD
THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS APPEAR SUDDENLY
THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS WAIT QUIETLY

THE LETTER THE FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS WERE ASKING ABOUT...
...IS AN INVITATION TO THE UNDERGROUND MASSAGE TOURNAMENT.
FLAP
MASSAGE CIRCLE!
What's
that?!
THE UNDERGROUND MASSAGE TOURNAMENT IS NOT KNOWN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC, AND IS ONLY OPEN TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.
SCHOOLS PIT THEIR BEST MASSEURS AGAINST ONE ANOTHER, AND WHICHEVER SCHOOL REIGNS SUPREME RECEIVES A LARGE CASH PRIZE.
SUPER SEEKRIT!
...Why not?
Is—is it really all right to hold such a thing?
THUD
WHACK
CALM DOWN.
OUCH!
GRAB
GRAB
She's a ninja!
Haruma, you're taking too long—
I'LL EXPLAIN.
NATSUE!!
Thank you!!

1ST
3RD
2ND
THERE ARE MANY POSSIBLE COMPETITIONS, SINCE THEY CHANGE THE FORMAT EVERY YEAR. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF MATCHES THEY WILL BE.
AND BECAUSE THE PROMOTER IS ALSO A SECRET, YOU WON'T LEARN THE DETAILS UNLESS YOU GO. IT'S A TOURNAMENT CLOAKED IN MYSTERY.
AS A RULE, THERE WILL BE A FIRST-YEAR STUDENT, A SECOND-YEAR STUDENT AND A THIRD-YEAR STUDENT IN EACH TEAM.
GUYS OR GIRLS
THREE STUDENTS FROM EACH SCHOOL WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE TOURNAMENT.
AND BECAUSE THE TOURNAMENT CHART IS SENT WITH THE INVITATION, OUR PARTICIPATION IS ALREADY SET.
FWIP

WELL, THIS AND THE HUGE CASH PRIZE
OH!
THAT WAS THE PURPOSE?!
WHY DO YOU THINK WE HAD SUMMER TRAINING CAMP?
CAN WE DECLINE THE INVITATION?
OOOH!
I NEVER KNEW SUCH A TOURNAMENT EXISTED
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF IT..

WHY DO YOU LOOK SO GRIM?!
SENPAI!! THIS COULD BE GREAT!!
FWIP
...
FWAP
PENALTIES
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND IF YOU TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.
WE LOST TWO YEARS AGO...
Cool!
WHOA!!
WITH THAT MONEY, WE COULD BUY NEW MASSAGE EQUIPMENT.
And if we have any left, we can use it for fun.
That's for our year
What's this?
Ewww!
Aaah!
First-year: Do everyone's homework during winter break
Glare
Cluck
Second-year: Clean the chicken coop during lunch every day
Third-year: Act as club manager until graduation
I don't have time to study...!
THEY'RE THE PENALTIES FROM THAT COMPETITION.
For the three representatives.
PENALTI

I can't wait...
I can't wait...
IT'LL BE... NATSUE.
HOW... CRUEL...
THIRD-YEAR STUDENT
HEY, HARUMI... WHO'S GOING TO COME UP WITH THE PENALTIES THIS YEAR?
GLOOOOM
FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS
HA HA... NO NEED TO WORRY!!
THIS YEAR IS GONNA BE HELL.
WE'RE FINISHED.
THE DANCE OF ROSES...
YEAH, A REAL COME-FROM-BEHIND VICTORY! It was so cool—
LAST YEAR WAS AMAZING.
WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT?
Huh? Oh no. Not again
OUR GRADE HAS THE PRINCE, TOGU!
OH YEAH!!
WHAT? ME?
WAIT... TOGU SENPAI PARTICI-PATED?
And he actually looked cool!

ALL RIGHT! WE GOT A SECOND-YEAR STUDENT!!
FWIP
FWUMP
I'LL BE PARTICI-PATING.
I WISH I COULD HAVE SEEN IT...
DOKATCH
DOKATCH
DOKATCH
YUNA, THANK YOU SO MUCH!
HUH? FOR WHAT?!
THANK YOU!
It's all thanks to you!
HUG
Bravo!
THAT'S RIGHT.. THEY NEED A FIRST-YEAR TOO!
AH...
ALL RIGHT YUNA!! LET'S FINISH ONE-TWO TOGETHER!!
DEFIN-ITELY NOT.
Let's work together!!
POSE
Oh yeah
AND THE FIRST-YEAR STUDENT WILL BE..
...EITHER CHIAKI OR YUNA.
The others are out of the question

BUT WILL CHIAKI DO IT?
UH, YES
GREAT! YOU'LL DO IT!
THAT'S TRUE.
...Wait. Ah...
He's excited
THE DIFFERENCE IN OUR ABILITY IS CLEAR!!
YUNA
CHIAKI
Look... see the difference!!
NO ONE IS MORE QUALIFIED FOR THIS THAN CHIAKI.
SHOVE
SHOULD IT BE THE MANAGER AGAIN?
ALL RIGHT! NOW WE JUST NEED A THIRD-YEAR STUDENT.
The difference has increased even more...
I'm as bad at arguing...
...
BECAUSE I WANT TO MAKE SURE I CAN WATCH EVERYONE'S MATCH THIS YEAR!!
I wouldn't be able to see it as a manager!
YAY!
YAY!
SNEAKY
I WON'T BE ABLE TO DO IT THIS YEAR
FORGIVE ME. .
That happened way too quickly ...
REQUEST DENIED.
We're set to use Haruna!

IT HAS TO BE A SECRET TO YOSUKE TOO...
I WONDER IF I CAN DO IT.
PLEASE KEEP IT A SECRET.
We'll be penalized if it's revealed
AS I'VE ALREADY SAID, REMEMBER: THIS TOURNAMENT IS NOT OFFICIAL.
NOW THEN. THE THREE PARTICIPANTS ARE SET, AND THE REST OF YOU WILL CHEER THEM ON.
...
OKAY.
IT ALMOST FEELS...
...AWKWARD BETWEEN NATSUE AND THE MANAGER.
OR AM I JUST IMAGINING IT?

CHIAKI
DO YOU HAVE A MINUTE?
MANAGER ?!
WHAT'S THE MATTER ?
I JUST WANTED TO TALK ABOUT OUR PLANS FOR THE TOURNAMENT.
OKAY.
OH YEAH... MANAGER ?
WHAT'S UP?
GULP GULP

Togu, Collector of Weird T-Shirts!

I don't have that many chances to draw normal clothes, but I love weird T-shirts, so I was happy when someone noticed the T-shirts in the summer training camp episode (laugh) Lately I've been into shirts that say "Samurai," "Professional" and "Single Strike." Sometimes they're sold at gift shops—though no one in their right mind would ever be seen in one.

SINGLE STRIKE

I WONDER WHY SHE'S THERE NOW.
HUH?
NATSUE?
YES... IT HAPPENED AT LUNCH THE OTHER DAY.
THIS IS RARE NATSUE'S NEVER IN THE COURTYARD.
...
SLIP
...?! WHY IS SHE CONFRONTING A CAT?
...
COME OVER HERE.
SHIT...
...
Now!
TWITCH

HEY.
BOING
...
CRASH
WOW!
HA HA HA HA! YOU WERE SNUBBED.
...
Mew..
Mew...
HEH.

WHAT?!
...!
N-NATSUE?!
What are you doing?!
SHIT...
YOU WERE...
...CUTER THAN THE CAT.
couldn't help myself
...
TMP
HUH?!

OH! SO THAT'S WHY IT SEEMED AWKWARD BETWEEN YOU TWO?
...YEAH.
She has a poker face. I never know what she's actually thinking.
HEY, THAT'S NOT TRUE!!
AARGH!
OR... IS THIS SOME KIND OF CRUEL JOKE?!
I'M SORRY... I THOUGHT YOU WERE CUTE TOO JUST NOW..
"COULDN'T HELP" HERSELF?! THAT'S WHY SHE HUGGED ME?! WHAT DOES "CUTE" EVEN MEAN IN THE FIRST PLACE?!
NO FACIAL EXPRESSION AT ALL.
GLOOM
...
YOU'RE RIGHT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL WHAT SHE'S THINKING.
I'm a failure as a younger student.
HEY, DON'T BE THAT CONCERNED ABOUT THAT!
Come on
NATSUE SOMETIMES...
...SMILES REALLY BIG!
AND SHE CAN GET PRETTY ANGRY, TOO!

BUT THEN TOGU CAME IN LAST YEAR, AND NOW WE HAVE YOU THIS YEAR.
I'M SO HAPPY...
IN MY LAST YEAR OF SCHOOL, I GET TO WORK WITH THE BEST MASSAGE TEAM EVER.
YOU'RE MY IDOLS...
Personally, I think it's great that you guys aren't super-competitive.
That's true.
EVEN IF ALL IT AMOUNTS TO IS A FUN TIME AFTER SCHOOL
I WANTED TO TALK ABOUT NATSUE... BUT I ALSO WANTED TO TALK ABOUT THE TOURNAMENT.
Well...
...
BEFORE LAST YEAR, OUR SCHOOL DIDN'T HAVE ANY TALENTED MASSEURS.
Last year was also the first time we didn't have penalties.
THAT'S WHY THERE WAS NO POINT IN HAVING NATSUE WORK HARD ON THE BUDGET.

...
Manager
HOW NICE THAT YOU'RE ABLE TO WORK WITH SOMEONE YOU IDOLIZE.
SLEAK
JOLT
N-N-NATSUE?!
Where did you come from?!
THERE
This is sorta embarrassing
IT'S TRUE THAT I THOUGHT YOU WERE CUTE.
AND IT'S NOT TRUE THAT I TRIED TO MAKE FUN OF YOU.
BY THE WAY...
TH-THEN WHY DID YOU HUG ME?!

KA-THUMP
AH... AH... WELL...
WHAT'S WRONG?
Umm...
WHO DID YOU SAY YOU IDOLIZED AGAIN?!
...
SHFF SHFF
SOSEKI NATSUME, INAZO NITOBE AND YUKICHI FUKUZAWA.
*THESE ARE PEOPLE ON THE LOWEST DENOMINATION YEN BILLS
...RIGHT!
TAP TAP
1000
HMMM... I WONDER.

AT LAST... THE TOURNAMENT STARTS TOMORROW.
TOURNA~
mfff!
?
I HAS TO STOP HERSELF FROM MENTIONING IT
I WORKED EXTRA HARD THIS PAST WEEK!
TOGU! I NEED YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR.
?
SWIPE
I ONLY NEED TO KEEP THE SECRET ONE MORE DAY...
YOU CAN DO IT, CHIAKI!
STRIDE
OH!
DAY DUTY...
What should I do if someone sees me?
INHALE

DAY DUTY AGAIN?
How many times have you been forced into that?
OH!
Yosuke!
HUH?
SHFF..
REACH
...IT'S HIGH!!
SEEZ..
WELL... I WASN'T FORCED EXACTLY..
So call!
...
If you say so
SO WHERE'S YOUR DAY DUTY PARTNER? IN THE LOCKER?
EEEK! SORRY!! SORRY!!
...
AH, EXCUSE ME,
COULD YOU PLEASE STOP STARING AT ME SO, INTENTLY?
STARE
IT MAKES IT HARD FOR ME TO WRITE

HUH?
YOU HAVE A TOURNAMENT?
Massage?
...
HEY!!
(State of Mind
THIS!
Tomorrow is the massage Tournament. I want to do the best I can as a representative of school.
HEY...
I'M SORRY.
?
WHAT SHOULD I DO?! MAYBE I CAN STILL TRY TO DODGE IT!
DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE
ERASE
ERASE
ERASE
OKAY, THAT LOOKS KIND OF FUN.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

!!
GAH!
Eeep!
LURCH
WH-WHAT'S THE MATTER?
...!
I CAN'T LIE TO YOSUKE AFTER ALL.
SHH!
IT'S A SECRET...
...
Ah—
I GET IT NOW. JUST DON'T DO THAT TO OTHER GUYS, OKAY?
...?
"That"?
NO, NO, NO!!
You don't get it at all, do you?!
FLUSH
FLAIL
FLAIL
OH! THE SECRET STORY?!
OKAY, OKAY— I UNDERSTAND!
Secret stories are priceless!!

STILL DOESN'T GET IT
OH... WAS IT BAD TO PUT MY FINGER ON MY MOUTH?
YOU CAN'T STRIKE THAT POSE.
...
THEN... WHAT WAS THE PROBLEM?
GRI
THAT REMINDS ME...
OHHH... I SEE.
BECAUSE IT WAS CUTE...
...
That was too fast.
SCRAPE
I WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE YOSUKE TOMORROW.
I SEE...
GETS ANXIOUS EASILY
...KIND OF NERVOUS.
I HOPE I DO WELL TOMORROW.
OH! I'M STARTING TO FEEL...

BUT THEN HOW SHOULD I ASK?
Hey. The sunset is pretty.
SO WHAT SHOULD I DO? SHOULD I JUST ASK HIM?
I JUST WISH I COULD GET SOME ENCOURAGE-MENT FROM HIM.
"I HAVE A TOURNAMENT TOMORROW...AND, I FEEL A LITTLE AFRAID."
"PLEASE HELP ME TO FEEL CONFIDENT AND PUMPED UP!"
"ANYTHING YOU CAN SAY WILL HELP..."
"PLEASE TELL ME I'LL DO WELL!!"
UGH, NO. THAT'S SO FORCED.
PRACTICING
THEN..
.. MAYBE I'D FEEL MORE CONFI-DENT.
ALL RIGHT!
...
SKRRRAPE

...
Hey— That hurt.
MUMUR
TAKEN DOWN
IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT IF THERE'S ONE THING I'M SURE OF..
?!
THUMP
...
LEAN
CLONK
IT'S YOUR SKILLS.
humur
AWWW
OH... WOW.
HE'S SMILING ...!
!!
Did that make you feel better? I hope so!
SO YOU SHOULD JUST GO OUT THERE WITH CONFIDENCE.

Bye!
OH! I CAN FEEL THE LOVE IN THE THROBBING OF MY FOREHEAD.
IT HURTS... IT REALLY HURTS! BUT-
HEY!
HEY!
JUMP
WAIT!!
You! Girl! Over there!!
YES?
...
I REALLY DO LOVE HIM.
I'LL DO MY BEST!!

GREEN
HUH?
ISN'T THAT A VIOLATION OF SCHOOL RULES?
We can't dye our hair.
Y-YES...
YOU'RE A MEMBER OF THE MASSAGE CLUB, RIGHT?
ARE YOU WONDERING HOW I FIGURED IT OUT?
A MASSEUR'S ARMS HAVE A DISTINCT TYPE OF TENSION. I CAN SPOT IT A MILE AWAY!
THIS GUY IS A MASSEUR TOO?!
WAIT A MINUTE! I'VE SEEN THAT UNIFORM SOMEWHERE BEFORE..
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
UH... MY NAME IS... TOGU.
TOGU...
JOLT
PAT
...

GRAB
TOGU?! WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
YOU'RE NOT TAKESHI'S LITTLE SISTER, ARE YOU?!
JUMP
TAKESHI ?!
I'M SORRY, OLDER BROTHER! I LIED...
RELEASE
CRYING
HA HA HA HA! RELEASE
HMM... I GUESS THAT MAKES SENSE, CONSIDERING YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE HIM AT ALL.
...
NO. I'M... NOT.
I GET THE FEELING... THERE'LL BE HUGE TROUBLE IF I SAY HE'S RIGHT.
INSTINCT
FLIP FLIP
DANGLE
...
WELL, WHAT SHOULD I DO? IT LOOKS LIKE TAKESHI ALREADY WENT HOME.
SO I GUESS THERE'S NO POINT IN WAITING LIKE THIS ANYMORE
ONE MORE

HUH?
EEP!
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
HEY, CAN I ASK YOU TO DELIVER A MESSAGE TO HIM?
...
GRIN
GRAB
TELL HIM...
OH, YES! SURE!
I'LL BE WAITING AT THE TOURNAMENT.

THE MAGIC TOUCH, PART 11 / END